

Rep. Allen West (R.-Fla.) exhorted college students to "take back the soul of America" by transforming the political landscape, but encouraged them to maintain an "incremental" view of this job, at Young America's Foundation's National Conservative Student Conference this morning.

As a retired Army lieutenant colonel, West framed how students should approach fighting liberal ideology in military terms, particularly stressing the necessity of knowing one's enemies and their tactics. He defended his recent controversial vote in favor the debt-ceiling deal in Congress as a tactical move that didn't allow Democrats to get the things that they really wanted: tax increases, and forcing Republicans into a bad light by causing a crisis that could be foisted onto the Republican refusal to sign a compromise bill.

"President Obama has an incredible aura, but looked inept, incompetent and irrelevant. We checked and checkmated [the Democrats] because we found out what they really wanted."

West went on to express that while the debt deal was by no means perfect, it simply wasn't possible to achieve a perfect deal with Republicans controlling only a third of the branches of government.

"Conservatives have a problem with incrementalism," he said. "We have to bide our time until we control all three branches." He laid out the four key goals liberal progressives are working toward that conservatives must combat in an incremental fashion: nationalizing production, creation and expansion of the welfare state, creation of a utopic state, and creation of a secular state.

The best way to combat liberal ideology, West said, is with facts, calling liberalism "deceptive in its very core." He said that at this point, the strongest facts conservatives can present should deal with the declining state of the economy.

But conservatives shouldn't only discuss facts defensively to combat liberal ideas, West explained when asked a question about his recent controversial and harsh comments to the chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Rather, he told students not to be ashamed to

put liberals on the defensive.

"I have turned the other cheek enough times that I have a crick in my neck. ... You have to demand that they respect you. Stand up for who you are and what you believe in."